

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

Chair: Peter Burling
Vice Chair: Katherine Hersh

Meeting Summary

April 22, 2011

10:00 am

LOB 201, Concord

Present: Nancy Larson, Mike Tardiff, Thomas Mahon, Kit Morgan, Senator Molly Kelly, Kathy Hersh, Kerrie Diers, Tim Moore, David Preece, Stephen Pesci, Malcom Taylor, Mike King, Ray Gagnon

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Input – *Members of the public wishing to will be given an opportunity to address the NHRTA Board - none*
- III. Minutes
 - a. *Minutes of February 25, 2011 - tabled*
 - b. *Minutes of March 25, 2011- tabled*
- IV. State Rail Plan Update – Kit Morgan reported that there were two public meetings, as well as an initial meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The consultants are working hard on getting input from many stakeholders. The State's consultant, Ron O'Blenis, stated that they are conducting interviews with stakeholders, including shippers, freight and passenger rail. They are receiving a lot of information. There will be another TAC meeting in June for further discussion.

Mike King asked about the meeting in Littleton. He observed that it was very poorly attended, and asked if there might be another one. There was virtually no notification of the event. Kit Morgan said they would attempt to do so, maybe after there was more to report. It was not well advertised and the attendance showed that. He said he would try to schedule a follow up meeting.

Kathy Hersh said she attended the meeting in Concord which was also not well attended. The facility was not a normal venue for public meetings, and there were no signs directing people where to go. The building looked dark and acoustics were not good. There are more potential users in Nashua who might be interested in hearing what you have learned from freight. Steve Pesci suggested a meeting on the seacoast where there may be more public awareness of the rail issues and offered to help find a location. The members of the NHRTA offered to help publicize future events.

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- V. HB 218 Update – Malcolm Taylor reported that the amendments are not available to the public yet. Senator Kelly stated that Senator Boutin brought forward an amendment and will be introducing another one. The amendments are in process.

The members of the Authority discussed the potential amendments. Some members stated that losing the eminent domain and bonding authority would be the issue down the road and that was power that would be used in conjunction with the legislature anyway.

The members discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Authority that are important to the State's economic future. We work with businesses and legislators, looking to examine passenger rail in relationship to economic growth and sustainability. Upgrading the track for passenger rail also benefits freight. The State having a rail authority carries weight with federal agencies.

VI. NH Capitol Corridor Updates

- a. Schedule for alternatives analysis – Kit Morgan informed the authority that the letters of interest were due on April 8. We received 9 letters. The committee met and considered the letters, and discussed the short list. The list needs to be approved, and then letters and the scope of work will go out to the short list of consultants. The FTA will need to approve the scope of work before it goes out. FTA needs to approve the scope first probably within a week or two. Once that is approved, then the short list is notified and invited to submit proposals within 3- 4 weeks. The proposals will be considered by the committee and conduct interviews, negotiate and contract. Then, the contract will need to go through G&C process.

Kathy Hersh said that she talked to Mike Pillsbury who thought the September G&C was the target date at this point.

- b. Match – Kit reported that the wording was changed to allow the capital budget as match. That was included in HB 25 that passed the house.

- VII. Plaistow update – Tim Moore reported that the project is progressing. One significant occurrence is that the DOT agreed to be the project manager of the project, which is what the committee was hoping they would do. They are still working on the Pentucket Agreement. This will be done in parallel with an MOU between the DOT and the Town of Plaistow. They are working out the details of how the town would own and operate the station on the park & ride. They are also dealing with tax revenue issues. That MOU would need to

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be approved by the Executive Council and they are hoping to brief Chris Sununu soon.

VIII. Outreach

- a. Resolutions - none
- b. Presentations - none
- c. Marketing piece - none

IX. Other Discussion

- a. Enfield bridge project – resolution tabled
- b. Other – Kathy Hersh reported that the Authority received a resignation letter from Mike Izbicki dated April 8, 2011. Mike King said that we should accept the letter with regrets. Kathy Hersh thanked Mike for his service to the NHRTA and for everything he has done to advance passenger rail in NH.

X. Next meeting –Scheduled for May 20th

Other Discussion:

- We may want to have Bob Hall from Exeter to give us a presentation on their station upgrades.
- Publications of interest: Boston and Maine Historical Society publication – the latest issue features Manchester and some of Nashua. The mailing address for the Society is PO Box 438, Derry, NH and the issues costs \$10

XI. Non-public session - none

XII. Adjourn - The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerrie Diers
NHRTA Secretary